

Appendix D: VSO Notification Letter

VSO Letter

Veteran Senior Leaders,

I am writing to inform you that the Department of Veterans Affairs is announcing important changes to the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program. The SAH program administers grants to Service members and Veterans with certain severe service-connected disabilities. SAH grants assist with building, remodeling or purchasing an adapted home and help seriously disabled Veterans live more independently.

Public Law 116-154, “The Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019” (PL 116-154), amends existing laws to expand grant benefits to the most seriously disabled Service members and Veterans. Among the new changes, the SAH benefit has expanded eligibility to those Service members and Veterans with service-connected blindness but no accompanying disability.

Congress created the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program as part of the *Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944*, or “G.I. Bill”. The VA Loan Guaranty program provides a VA backed guaranty for mortgage loans made by private lenders to eligible Veterans that effectively eliminates the need for a down payment and helps Veterans afford homeownership. Since 1944, VA has backed over 25 million home loans for Veterans and their families, and it has awarded more than 44,000 SAH grants.

In FY2020, VA awarded 2,086 grants to seriously disabled Veterans, helping these grant recipients adapt their residences to their specific, specialized needs. New changes to the program will help VA administer more grants to wider groups of seriously disabled Veterans.

Changes to the SAH program under PL 116-154 include:

- Veterans rated with a service-connected blindness disability, without a loss or loss of use of a lower extremity are now eligible for the SAH grant.
- Statute now reflects that all SAH-qualifying disabilities must be permanent. These changes became effective on August 8, 2020.
- The lifetime grant usage is no longer limited to three uses for each individual. Eligible Service members and Veterans are now able to use the grant a total of six times.
- VA is authorized to approve up to 120 grants per year, an increase from the previous statutory limit of 30 per fiscal year for Veterans and Service members who experienced the loss or loss of use of *one* lower extremity after September 11, 2001.
- The aggregate limit amount for the SAH grant has been raised to \$100,896, and the SHA grant has been increased to \$20,215.

Veterans and Service members may now be eligible for an additional use of their SAH benefit after 10 years, beginning on October 1, 2030. VA is proud of its mission to maximize the

opportunity for Veterans and Service members to obtain, retain, and adapt homes by providing a viable and fiscally responsible benefit program in recognition of their service to the nation.

To obtain more information about the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant at VA, visit: <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants/>.

For more information about the VA Home Loan Program, visit <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/>.

If you have any questions related to VA Home Loans or any specific issues in your area, please contact the Regional Loan Center with jurisdiction in your state, which is listed online at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/contact_rlc_info.asp.

Thank you for supporting, and helping VA support, those who have served our country.

Thomas Murphy
Acting Under Secretary for Benefits
Department of Veterans Affairs